TWO LITTLE SOUTHERN SISTERS

AND THEIR GARDEN PLAYS

MARTHA YOUNG

HINDS, HAYDEN & ELDREDGE

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To

ELLEN GREY YOUNG

WHO PLAYED SO SHORT A WHILE IN THE GARDENS OF EARTH

TWO LITTLE SOUTHERN SISTERS

AND THEIR GARDEN PLAYS

BY

MARTHA YOUNG

ILLUSTRATED BY

MABEL BETSY HILL

AND

RALPH PRATT

HINDS, HAYDEN & ELDREDGE, Inc.

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Two Little Southern Sisters and Their Garden Plays

GOOBERS

I THINK it was one time when our cousins came to visit, and we all played about the great open fireplace, with the roses nodding in at the windows, that we had the most fun and the best time. That day our nurses filled the long brass-handled shovels with goobers dried in the sun after the "digging," and they shook those shovels over the red coals, parching the goobers deliciously.

GOOBERS GROWING

The little cousin from Georgia cried, "Aren't these peanuts good?"

Said the little cousin from Tennessee, "Yes, they are good. I always did like *ground-peas!*"

Then the little cousin from North Alabama said, "Of course they are good,

but why don't you call them *pindars?* They are pindars!"

But the little coast-country cousin laughed and laughed and said, "Oh, you are all so funny, and these are so good, but I call them *goobers!*"

And would you believe that all those little cousins began to laugh and make faces and almost quarrel, and that they ran up and down among the roses that were nodding in the warm autumn air, calling to each other in naughty tones:

"Georgia peanuts!"

"Ground-peas! Ground-peas!"

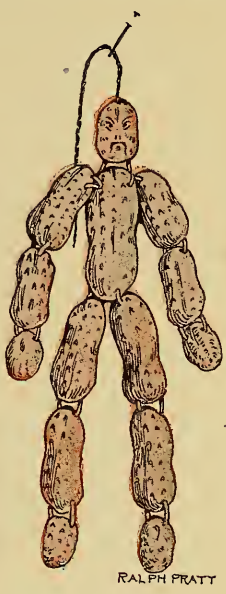
"Oh, they are pindars! pindars! pindars!"

Meanwhile the cheery little coast-country cousin just could not quarrel, but half-laughing, half-singing, kept saying, "Goobers! goobers! Oh, goober-peas!"

The noise was so great, and a quarrel so near, all about nothing but fun, that aunts and Grown-up Cousin came to

see what the matter was. Grown-up Cousin exclaimed:

"Now, all are right and all are wrong. They have all those names and one is as good as another. I could tell you as many more names as those you know, and all as good; but, instead, you tell me which of you ever saw a Goober-man!"



THE GOOBER-MAN

And not one of them, nor my little Sister and I, had ever seen a Goober-man! Then said Cousin:

"Bring me five one-toed goobers."

Thereupon six little girls ran off, and soon brought the five goobers, each with one nut, and only one, in its shell; that was what Cousin called a "one-toed goober."

Next she said, "Bring me eight two-toed goobers."

Again six little girls ran to do her bidding. It was not hard to find goobers with two nuts in each shell, for most goobers are like that.

"Now bring me one goober with three toes," Cousin directed.

That was harder to find, for goobers do not often grow that way; but we did find several with three nuts in the shell, and Cousin chose the finest and largest one.

Using this three-toed goober for a body, she fastened to it, with needle and thread, a one-toed goober for a head — a quaint, yellow, wrinkled head.

To make an arm she strung together two goobers, each with two nuts in the shell. Twice she did this, adding to each arm a one-toed goober for the hand. Legs and feet were made in the same way — tiny Chinese feet.

After sewing the arms and legs to the body, Cousin painted a water-colored face on the wrinkled, yellow, goober

head, and plaited a black silk queue to fasten to it. Then she made a yellow silk cap to fit the goober head.

Oh, what a queer little head!

Next she made blue silk trousers and a red silk blouse. When she had put them on the Goober-man, how droll he looked!

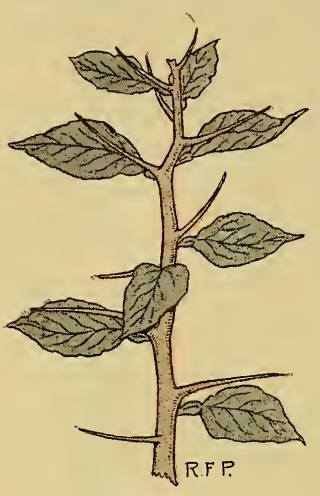
A NICE LITTLE MANDARIN

A comical little Chinaman! A nice little mandarin!

We children laughed and laughed, and felt as if we could never again come near quarreling, not ever! We all started making goober-men dolls—such funny little goober-men dolls!

LEMON PIGS

When my little Sister and I went visiting our cousins who lived far south, in Alabama, and in Florida, our favorite playground was under the thorny lemon trees. We had no lemon trees in the garden at home.



THE THORNY LEMON

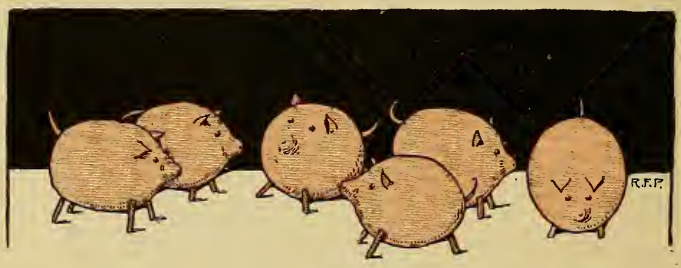
In Florida the leaves of the lemon trees are so sweet that they fill the air with delicious odors, and the mocking-birds love to flutter about them. And we loved to be under those trees! We read story-books and played dolls in their shade.

But the play we liked best of all was to have a drove of pigs for each of us to take care of and to drive to pasture.

Any way-down-south child knows that every round, fat lemon has already a "snout" of its own. So with snouts ready-made, it is easy to make a drove of nice fat pigs. We used to cut out of the rind two yellow ears that stood up of themselves—a little three-cornered cut does it. Then we lifted those ears and bent them into shape. The eyes were heads of matches. We cut off most of the wooden part of two red-headed, or brown-headed, matches, sharpened the ends into points, and stuck them into the lemon until only the heads showed. We could make one pig look different from another by setting his eyes farther apart, and by cutting his ears in a sharper point or cocking them at a different angle. Then, too, we could give one pig longer legs than another, or a curlier tail, so that no two pigs would look just alike.

It was fun to make the legs and the tails for our pigs. We stuck in four

matches for legs. If we made the front legs the longer, our pig was the kind that would look about and start off to explore. If the back legs were the longer, it was the kind of pig that would stay at home and root in the ground with great contentment. If it had very, very short back legs, it would sit on the ground, like a dog. And we would push



THE LEMON PIGS

the match-legs so far into the body that our pig could sit on the ground in any position that we wished.

The tail was made by whittling a bit of match so thin that we could bend it until it had the proper curl.

Oh, those yellow lemon pigs looked funny in a drove, or when they were

camped out together under a tree, or when they were scattered about feeding in the grass! They were so fat and so cunning!

The lemons themselves look pretty growing on the trees, or lying thick on the grass, yellow and fragrant. Away-down-south children have all the lemons they want to play with.

LARKSPUR BOOKMARKS

Our mother always said, "There must be flowers for the children to pick—just as many as they want. Not the fine flowers—just common flowers a plenty, for the children to gather and play with."

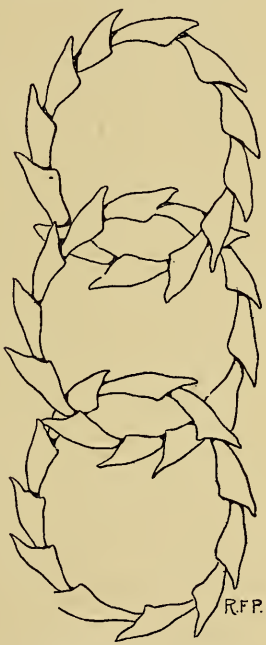
A SPRAY OF LARKSPUR

So our garden was full of the old-fashioned flowers that children like, fragrant roses and spicy pinks, great tall hollyhocks which the bumblebees liked too, red silk poppies, snapdragons, Canterbury bells, and rocket larkspur.

How we did enjoy the larkspur when it bloomed in June! Some bore long rods of pink flowers, and some bore rods, just as long, of blue.

We never expected or watched for the larkspurs to bud, or waited for them to bloom. Just suddenly, some early summer day, the most unexpected places of the garden would be aglow with larkspur all a-flower. Then my Sister and I would say to each other:

"Let us make bookmarks for our books! Let us make larkspur bookmarks!" Every year we would say that same thing—and no summer passed that we did not make bookmarks out of larkspur! This is the way we set to work: First we picked off a flower. Catching the "spur" petal with thumb and finger, we drew it, ever so carefully, off from the calyx. Then we drew off another, and another, and another spur



A WREATH BOOKMARK

petal, picking from the flower-rod but one blossom at a time.

When we had enough "spurs," we carried them in our aprons, and sat down in the arbor, or under a tree, to make the bookmarks. We slipped the "toe" of one spur into the "shoe" of another spur, and so on, "heel and toe," until the spurs were joined in a row, or chain. Then we bent the chain of petals into a circle, and slipped the toe at one end into the shoe at the other, making a perfect ring, or wreath.

These wreaths of spur petals we called bookmarks. We could use one ring for a mark, or, when we were making them, we could link several rings together to make a prettier mark. We linked them in a row or we linked them in a circle, making a large garland of the little wreaths. Often we made our rings all of blue spurs, and sometimes we made them all of pink spurs. Sometimes we made them with first a blue spur and

then a pink one, then blue, then pink, and so on. Sometimes we did not make the chain of spur petals into a wreath at all, but instead left it straight, only bending one end in a pretty curve, to form a shepherd's crook.

Whatever the pattern, though, we always pressed the bookmarks flat so they would keep their shape and color.

A SHEPHERD'S CROOK BOOKMARK

In making the bookmarks, sometimes we pulled out the two little crumpled, folded-up petals that lie in the spur, and sometimes we did not. English larkspur, the tall, bright blue formosum kind that our mother called delphinium—delphinium formosum—had these funny folded-up petals, like little clubs, in the spurs; but our

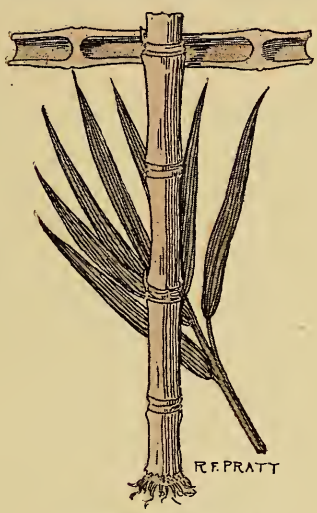
own larkspur that we loved best to play with, was the familiar, shorter sort, with the pale-blue and pale-pink blossoms.

We gave the marks to Mother, or to our aunts and cousins, to "keep the place" in their books, and sometimes we put them in our own books. They would last a long while. In some of our books we have larkspur bookmarks that we have kept since we were little girls.

SPUR PETALS

FROM THE CANEBRAKE

The canebrakes on the borders of the Southern rivers are beautiful. Little folks never go there to play—there are too many snakes!



PARTS OF THE CANE

But canes were brought up, in one way or another, for us children. We always had them to play with.

Long ago, before the gentle, soft-voiced Indians, the Choctaws, left our state, wandering westward, we looked for them every spring to come into our villages, and out to the plantations, bringing their wares to sell. They brought very beautiful baskets made of woven cane reeds brightly dyed. What Alabama girl has not her own pretty Indian basket!

For the little boys they brought blow-guns with arrows.

The gun was a long, straight cane, carefully hollowed out, the tough fiber at the joints burned through with red-hot wires. Some of those marvelous guns were three yards long! The arrows were short wires, with a wisp of cotton firmly bound about one end; round and round was the cotton tightly bound until the arrow looked like a cat-tail growing by the brook.

The arrow was put into the long gun; then you lifted the gun in both hands as if it were a trumpet, and—blew!

How the arrow flew!

It was wonderful how expert at target-shooting we children became—we little girls used to shoot with these long slender blow-guns, as straight as our brothers!

We used to think too that nothing made so good a fishing-pole as the long lithe cane—how those natural rods would spring to the nibble of a fish!

And oh, the music we children would get from our cane flutes! They were the true Indian flutes —the Choctaws used to bring them to sell. They looked simple; but we knew by experience that it was not easy to make a cane flute that would "play," though it was just a section of cane, with a mouth-hole cut near the fibrous joint, the pith extracted, and small notches cut where the fingers might start and stop the breathing melody. What little Southern girl has not worked patiently for many a sunny hour, with her pocketknife, trying to make a flute that would "sound."

THE FISH-POLE

Oh, the waving, murmuring, canebrake, green and cool! It is one of the dearest of my childhood's outdoor pictures! But it will not be long, now, till the rich old river-bottoms will be cleared

up for the growing of cotton crops and corn. Then good-by to reed baskets, and to blow-guns, and to cane fishing-poles, and to the Indian flutes we loved!

PETUNIA LADIES

In an old part of the garden the petunias had been allowed to run wild, so that when they were in bloom the place looked like a sheet of green summer sea with white foam-tips atop. Then it was that my little Sister and I loved to play "petunia ladies."

A PETUNIA BLOSSOM

We gave great "flower-lady parties" down in the garden, with sweet-fern seed and elderberries set out for a feast, on a palma Christi leaf for a table. And what happy times we had dressing the "ladies"!

At home, Miss Petunia wore a plain white frock without furbelows, very sweet and becoming. But for parties there must be party-dresses.

Miss Petunia herself in her white home frock, was a blossom we had picked — with a large-enough green stem. We put her down to stand alone, her white skirt open wide on the garden walk. The green calyx was her basque, with nice green tabs such as you may see in old-time fashion pictures.

A PETUNIA LADY AND LITTLE GIRL

We stood ever so many petunia ladies, like that, on the walk.

Then we picked a great many more petunias of all sizes. We pulled off each stem and calyx at the open throat of the bell; and then we dropped one of the round corollas over Miss Petunia's head—that made one ruffle on the skirt. And so on and on, until her skirt was decked with snowy ruffles up to her green waist; after that we carefully laid out the green tabs over the last corolla.

A floret of verbena pulled from its calyx and put, corolla down, on Miss Petunia's head, gave her a hat like the one Mother Goose wears, with high, pointed crown.

But Lady Petunia did not always go

MAKING PETUNIA LADIES

alone to the party. There were two sorts of petunias in the old garden, the wide white single ones, and the small bell-shaped red ones. Little Sister and I used to dress the tiny red ones out in many, many red flounces, and play that

they were the little girls of the stately matrons in white. Of course, they went with their petunia mothers to the party of the flower ladies.

SCARLET SAGE CROWNS

We children did not know when to expect the scarlet sage to bloom. We did know, every summer, that there would be that glad surprise—when the hundreds of tall green staffs in the outer borders and odd places would suddenly show those fiery red tips that made a blaze of scarlet in the old garden. Then one of us—perhaps it was the little cousin from Georgia—would cry:

"Let us crown the summer-time!"

So we gathered scarlet tips until our aprons were full. Then we sat in some sheltered corner where the winds wouldn't blow our pretty work away, and began to make scarlet sage crowns. We laid the flower-tips on the covers of our story-books, being careful not to crush the flowers, for they would stain! as red!—a very pretty red for painting

paper-ladies' cheeks, but it would have spoiled our story-book covers.

With a story-book cover for a firm work place, like a drawing board for the artist, we began a summer-crown. We slipped one red tip deep into the throat of another red tip, and so on, and so on, and so on, till the scarlet wreath was round and as red as the outer ring of the harvest moon.

Then we threw it high in the air, and cried, "Here's for the summer!" and watched the scarlet crown fall all in pieces in the yellow sand.

Or, perhaps, if it was in the cool of the afternoon, we "made statues." We crowned our own locks with summer's scarlet crowns and ran to our favorite round bed bordered with green box bushes. We each chose a bush, and dropping into its stiff, but yielding branches we sat as still as still could be, waiting for passers-by. The box bushes fitted all around us like easy

chairs with enveloping backs and arms of leafy greenness. Then when our aunts, or uncles, or our grown-up cousins passed by in the garden, they were sure to say:

"MAKING STATUES"

"What fairies are these sitting in the box trees crowned with scarlet crowns?"

SNAPDRAGON

Oh, how glad we were in midsummer when the snapdragons bloomed! We loved to pluck the fiercest ones and make them talk. We caught them by the throat and pressed them, and their mouths opened and shut, and opened and shut.

My little Sister held a wee snapdragon by the throat and made him open his mouth and say: "Why are we called snapdragons?"

And I held a big snapdragon by the throat and made him open his mouth and say: "Because the Greek storybooks are wrong; they tell that Cadmus sowed dragons' teeth and armed men sprang up, but I was there and that wasn't true — flowers sprang up, and Cadmus called them 'snapdragons.'"

Then my Sister made her little snapdragon say: "And so we didn't have to go to fighting at all!"

Then I made my snapdragon say: "No, though we are dragons, we don't fight."

Then she made her little snapdragon open his mouth very wide and say: "What time of the year is this?"

My snapdragon said: "Summer-time!"

So her snapdragon asked: "Why call it summer-time?"

And my snapdragon answered: "I reckon because it's a lazy time; when we ask Mammy for a story she goes to sleep and says, 'I'll tell you some-o'her-time, some-o'her-time.'"

The little snapdragon inquired: "What was the time before?"

And the large snapdragon told him: "Spring-time; that was the time we all came springing up!"

Then the little snapdragon said: "What will the next time be?"

And the large one replied: "Fall;

flowers fall off then, and apples fall down."

The inquiring little snapdragon wanted to know: "What time next?"

The large one said: "Winter-time."

So the little one asked: "What about that?"

And the large one shivered and said: "I don't know; I never am here then."

Then the little snapdragon opened his mouth wide—and didn't say anything!

Sometimes we played "feed the babies," and opened the snapdragons' mouths to drop in bits of sweet-fern and rosemary and little seeds and the like, every bit of which they swallowed.

But we liked best to make them talk as though they were a Punch-and-Judy show.

OVER IN THE CORNFIELD

The big cornfield reached up to the flower garden, and we children had many play-places just through the hedge, in among the tall, rustling stalks. Many a fine ear of corn did we spoil, my little

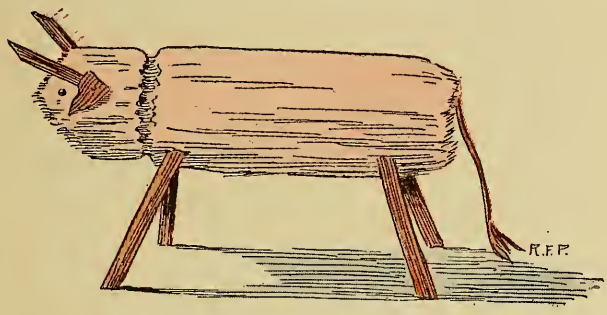
OVER IN THE CORNFIELD

Sister, the little cousins, and I, getting corn silk to make curls to deck ourselves. Funny enough we looked with long twists of rosy and gold corn silk hanging over our own locks of yellow, brown, or black!

Later when the stalks were dry and the pith within was well-formed, we made comical corn-pith cows. We cut off a nice joint of cornstalk. We split the horny outside and peeled it carefully away so as to leave the pith clean and whole. Then we cut off just the right length for a cow. Four inches was a good length. With our pocket-knives we shaved one end for the head, and cut into the pith, evenly all around, to make the neck. From the hard outside of the stalk we split off two little "hooker-hookers," like those of the cow in the riddle, and stuck them into the head for horns — we used our knives to make places to stick them in. The two "harker-harkers" were cut from the same mate ial and pinned on. Two large black-headed pins made the "looker-lookers." Sometimes a strand of dry corn silk made the one "switch-about"; sometimes it was a strip of the stalk cut thin and frayed out at the end.

Last of all, we stuck in four stiff, slender "run-abouts," cornstalk legs — and there stood the cow — such a comical cow!

We made also corn-pith dancing girls. The favorite height was three inches. First, in the top of the head we dug



"SUCH A COMICAL COW!"

out a nice round hole in which to glue a bullet; or else three little holes for three big "shot." In some of these dolls the bullet was glued into the foot-end, instead of the head. Then we marked the features, the eyes with black ink, the lips with red ink. Out of corn husk we cut dresses for our pith girls, with scallopy points around the bottom; we

wound them around the neck with a bit of sewing silk. Then we stuck in little arms cut from cornstalk. Last of all we glued on long floating hair — dry brown corn silk. It was fun to have

CORN-PITH DANCING GIRLS

ever so many corn-pith girls together! Those with bullets at the top would dance and turn summersaults and then stand on their heads. When we stood the other kind on their heads, they would dance back to their toes every time.

Once Grown-up Cousin showed us, my little Sister and me, how to make a

young lady. Her name was "Miss Maize." Grown-up Cousin selected a fine joint of pith, and a fine ear or two of corn, with clean, perfect husks—"shucks," Southern children say instead of "husks." She broke the ear from the stalk in such a way as to leave a piece of the stem on the ear. Then she carefully laid open the husks and broke the fine fresh inner ones off close to the stem, so that they would keep their round clinging shape and could be used for clothes.

The young lady was made like the pith-girls, only taller, with a round head and a nicely shaped neck. Grown-up Cousin drew Miss Maize's features with a sweeter expression; her eyebrows and eyelashes were very carefully done, her mouth was small and red, and her rich corn-silk hair was wound round her head in a beautiful close fluff instead of being allowed to flow loose.

To dress Miss Maize, Grown-up Cousin

trimmed off, at the wider end, two of those fresh inside husks, the right length for a skirt, and scalloped them; the rounded stem ends just fitted over the young lady's waist. Next Grown-up Cousin cut from two husks a flowing cape with tiny points at the neck, and tied it on with a bit of pink ribbon. But the making of the bonnet was the best part. The stem end of a small husk fitted Miss Maize's head exactly. For a crownpiece, Grown-up Cousin sewed a little flap onto the back of this husk. She would cut it in front to please our taste; we usually chose a large poke bonnet as the most becoming to Miss Maize. Flowers and cunning little feathers cut out of husks were used for trimming. When her bonnet was on and the young lady stood under the green fig tree,

MISS MAIZE

dressed all in that rich, stiff, golden stuff — oh, lovely, lovely Miss Maize!

"Cousin, *you* are lovely to have made her," we cried.

We laid our new treasure within the outer husks of the ear, tied them tightly with a thread, and, carrying the dainty sheath by the stem, took her to the house. Then, what an enchanting pleasure for every one, to peep at her in her golden closet! All winter we kept her in our little bureau. We might build cob cabins and corn wigwams downstairs for our gay corn-pith girls — but Miss Maize dwelt apart, like an enchanted princess.

ROUND AND ROUND THE GREEN BOX BED

A SPRIG OF BOX

THERE was a round bed in Mother's garden, in the center of which was a sundial. All around the bed was a border of small box trees. Each box tree was trimmed as round as round could be. They sat on end around the edge of the bed, for all the world like great eggs — a circle of great green Easter eggs, each two feet high!

When my little Sister and I grew tired of everything else, we used to go to the box bushes to look for our fortunes. There was a round brown hollow down in the midst of each green ball. We would pull back the stiff green on top, peep down into the round brown hole, and always find in there — nothing

at all! Then we would laugh just as happily as if we had found — everything nice!

While the summer sun shone on us and the sundial marked the time, we would run round and round the circular bed, opening green boxes and looking into brown hollows, until we forgot which box we began with, and whether we had been *all* around; so then we had to begin again and mark our starting-place with a rose stuck into the stiff greenness of that bush, and the place where we left off, with a lily stuck into that.

The next morning the game was just as fresh and interesting as ever, for we fancied the fairies had been out all night, with little nasturtium leaves for umbrellas, and might have left our fortune in any one of those tiny box trees.

These were the same green box bushes which made quaint chairs for us when we sat like scarlet-crowned fairies.

GENEROUS HICKORY TREES

The hickory trees that spread wide black arms over the old fence corners and through the forests always seemed like real playfellows — playfellows and kind friends. They kept giving, giving — giving us something to play with, or something to please us, as our old black mammy did.

A SKIFF

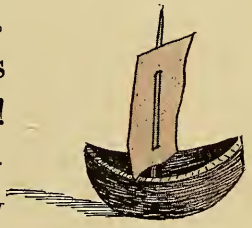
We must never go outside our garden without a grown person. It was Grown-up Cousin who went with us almost always, and almost always Somebody, too. He taught us how to make whistles from the wood of the hickory trees, the best of all wood for whistles with the long musical note! We loosened the bark for a mouthpiece, cut notches for notes, then blew through.

When we were walking in the woods and thirsted to drink from some cool,

sparkling spring half-hidden beneath overhanging ferns, we used to make drinking-cups from hickory leaves. We each picked a big leaf, rolled it into the form of a funnel, and ran a sharp, slender twig through to pin it in shape. We had to roll and fold carefully, so as not to leave a hole at the end of the funnel. Each of us, every little cousin, little Sister and I, even Grown-up Cousin, had a crisp green cup of her own.

ANOTHER SKIFF

In the chill, bright autumn, when the hickory nuts were ripening on the trees and falling to the ground, and the great hulls could be divided, such cradles—cradles that rocked with a touch! Perhaps when the night-winds rocked them gently back and forth, to and fro, the fairies' babies rocked in them, asleep in the moonlight!



AND ANOTHER SKIFF

Then, such boats from those hulls—skiffs, the Southern children called them. All we needed was a penknife, a match, and a bit of paper. Oh, the blissful hours we had with our hickory-hull boats, the paper sail held by the match; or boats without any sail at all. We floated them sometimes in a tub of water, sometimes in the smoother stretches of the brook.

But the funniest toy of all for us was the Hickory Nut Woman with her yellowish old wrinkled face, of the same color as the faces of some of the old house servants. Grown-up Cousin made this toy for us, and this is the way she did it. For the head she used a hickory nut. The pointed end was an excellent nose. From our boxes of water colors she painted black eyes, red cheeks, and a most expressive mouth. A stick pushed through the nut and down to the bottom of a small round box stuffed with cotton made the "framework." Grown-

up Cousin then sewed a little dark woolen frock for our toy, and stretched it over the box so as to give the skirt a smart stand-out. The waist she stuffed out with cotton, and the sleeves with cotton, for arms. She pinned on a white neckerchief, and folded and pinned about the head a red headkerchief for a turban. There! we had an old plantation aunty ready to wait on little doll misses and masters! So we provided her with apron and turban and neckerchief of pretty figured stuff. She could stand upright anywhere we placed her.

THE HICKORY NUT WOMAN

Sometimes, when we made a hickory woman ourselves, we stood her on our

little bureau and stuck her dress full of pins; then she was more than ever like a kind old mammy ready to give us a pin.

The hickory trees used to supply the Southern boys with "flippets" a plenty —pebble shooters. But we little girls never liked "flippets"!

IN THE HEDGEROWS

ALWAYS when we walked along the hedgerows of our fields in early summer, my little Sister and I loved to fancy that the fairies had washed out their lace dresses and hung them to dry, and that during the night they had been changed into flowers —for the elder bushes would be covered with masses of white bloom, like white lace net with tiny white flowers embroidered into it.

ELDERBERRIES

The elders were our special play-bushes. But as long as they were blooming, we knew that the pith in the elder stalk was not yet ripe enough to pull out. To make a play-gun we must wait for the pith to ripen.

When the flowers were gone, bunches of red and maroon and purple berries came where the bloom had been, and then the birds would make merry in the hedgerows. How they ate those berries! Oh, such fluttering bouquets of birds those elder bushes bore all day long!

Then it was that Somebody taught us how, with jack-knives, to make pop-guns and squirt-guns.

He taught us how to cut a joint of elder and draw out the pith. Then he took a stout stick and put a haft on it. So he made something like an old-time muzzle-loader! For a "load" he put a hard berry in the muzzle, drove the stick quickly into the tube up to the haft; then—pop! with the loud noise out went the berry!

How we did enjoy those pop-guns!

But for a squirt-gun, instead of cleaning out all the joint in the muzzle of the gun, he drilled little pinholes through the fiber, then loaded up with water,

put a mop of cotton on the rod, drove the rod through the gun — and, oh, such a spray!

What jolly times we had with the squirt-guns!

A POP-GUN

IN THE SEDGE FIELDS

One day it seemed to us little girls that we were living in a gilt-edged world, because when we looked out of *this* door we saw the great hill gold-topped. And we all asked excitedly: "What is that? What is that?"

The grown-up folks replied: "That is sedge turned yellow on the hilltop."

"Beautiful, *beautiful* sedge!" exclaimed the little coast-country cousin.

Then when we stood at *that* door and looked out, we saw the sunlight fall on another hill all gilded like the first. Again we asked eagerly: "What is that?"

The grown folks answered: "That is wild broom sedge glowing on the hillside."

"Wonderful wild broom sedge!" cried the little cousin from Georgia.

And when we saw more and more

slopes — yellow, yellow, yellow — we begged: "Take us up where the gold sedge grows!"

"Some day," the grown-up people promised.

"What day is some day?" asked the little cousin from north Alabama. And each day we asked that same question, until one day Somebody said

"To-day is some day!" Then, turning to Grown-up Cousin, he inquired: "May we take the children to the sedge fields to-day?"

"Why, yes," said Grown-up Cousin.

So we set out for the yellow fields.

We asked Somebody, "What is the sedge good for?"

"Good for nothing!" he told us, as we walked toward the gold-topped hill.

We little girls might have walked on and on without ever knowing that we had reached the gold field, if Somebody had not stopped short amid-field, while Grown-up Cousin sat down in the tall,

stiff stuff and cried, "Stop! Stop! Stop! Don't you know that you are *in* the gold sedge-fields!" Then Somebody also sat down, and they both laughed at us merrily.

Oh, how disappointed we were to learn

PLAYING JACKSTRAWS

that the fields of gold were but stiff clumps of rough, dry grass with feathery heads — good for nothing!

"It is the way things are," sighed the little coast-country cousin.

"But it is good to *know* how things

really are," said the little cousin from Tennessee.

"It is good to *enjoy* things as they really are," said Grown-up Cousin.

"Therefore," Somebody said, "run and bring me stiff smooth stalks of sedge and I will make jackstraws and teach you how to play a game."

So we ran and had great fun choosing and gathering the stiff smooth stalks. We took them to Somebody and he counted the best of the stalks we had brought. When he had chosen a hundred and two nice straws, he cut one hundred of them the same length, and the length was five inches. The other two stalks he cut each seven inches long. He ran a pin through the end of each of the seven-inch straws and bent that pin up like a hook. Then he gathered all the one hundred straws in one hand and, with the hand closed, held them about eighteen inches above the ground, while he counted, "One! Two!

Three!" At that he dropped the straws —all at once! They fell in a loose heap, helter skelter, every way!

Then Somebody began to teach us to play.

"Sit one at each side of the heap!" he directed.

So I sat on one side and little coast-country cousin on the other, and Somebody continued:

"Now each one take one of the pin-hook straws! Hold the straw handle carefully, and with the hook lift off just one straw from the heap."

I lifted one straw carefully, as I was told to do.

"Now another," said Somebody.

Then little coast-country cousin lifted a straw from the heap.

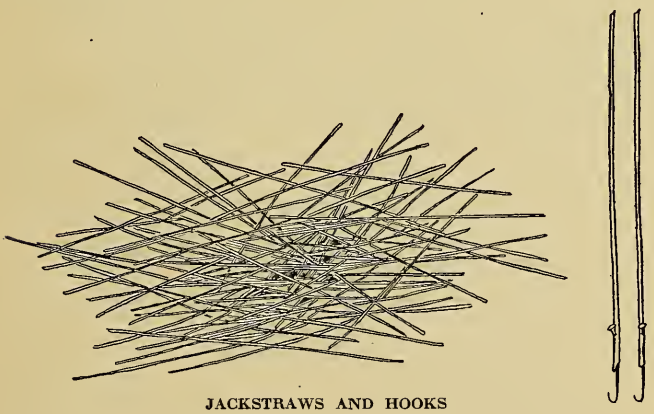
"Now another," said Grown-up Cousin.

"If you touch any straw with the hook but the one you lift off, you are out," explained Somebody, "and the other

one plays, and gets just as many as she can. The one who gets off the most straws wins the game."

We liked to play this game, and we carried our jackstraws and hooks home where we had the most fun sitting just inside the doorsill, dropping the straws on the floor in a heap, and lifting them, oh, so carefully, one by one.

We were glad indeed to learn that the gold broom sedge *is* good for something, after all!



JACKSTRAWS AND HOOKS

GARDEN JEWELS

"Come, let's go gather jewels!" called Grown-up Cousin to little Sister and me.

I was just old enough to enjoy the tales of Aladdin's wonderful cave of jewels, and little Sister was old enough to love to be told anything and everything that I could tell her; so we both felt very much excited and cried together: "Jewels!"

"We'll get them and then we'll set them," said Grown-up Cousin.

That, too, sounded good to us, but we wondered first how we could find jewels here at home and how, after we had found them, we could set them. Yet we well knew that home was the most wonderful of places, and that Grown-up Cousin could do anything, just anything in the world. So we followed her to the great magnolia tree.

There she began to move about slowly,

looking at the ground, and as she moved she carefully pushed the fallen dried leaves about with the toe of her slipper. Suddenly she said:

"No garnet is more beautifully red than this."

We both ran to look. What we saw was just a red seed.

"No color in all the world is more

THE GREAT MAGNOLIA

beautiful," said Grown-up Cousin, "and see what a great tree it comes from! From this red seed might come as great a tree, all rich and green, with hundreds of huge milk-white blossoms; and oh, the fragrance that those blossoms shed!"

We looked in amazement at the small red seed.

"Here's another," said little Sister.

"Yes," said Grown-up Cousin, "there are so many, so many hundreds of them that we may play that they are jewels and make toys of some of them."

Grown-up Cousin seated herself under the tree and said: "Bring me all you can find and I will make two necklaces of red, red garnets."

Little Sister was turning the leaves about, and already she had a handful of the seeds which she gave to Grown-up Cousin. Then we hunted and found many of the red seeds hanging from sockets on their great pods. These pods, when they had just dropped from the trees, were faintly green and so large that little Sister could not hide one quite out of sight by folding her two hands tightly over it. The seeds were difficult to string, for they were very hard, as walls must be to hold great

treasure, and we knew now what great treasure those small seeds held.

We felt proud, indeed, when we at last wore, each one, a necklace of red, red garnets.

GEMS OF THE FIELD

There did not seem to be any end to the things that Grown-up Cousin knew; and she seemed eager to tell us many of those lovely things. That was the reason why we were always so glad when Grown-up Cousin came to stay at our house.

We had hardly told all our little cousins about the garden garnets, and helped them gather magnolia seeds, and string the necklaces, when Grown-up Cousin said we needed crowns.

"Crowns!" cried the little coast-country cousin. "Are we queens?"

"Yes, all queens," said Grown-up Cousin, "every good little girl is a queen."

We liked to think that we were queens.

"Queens have scepters," said the cousin from Tennessee.

"Then we shall have scepters, too," said Grown-up Cousin. "To-day I will take you where both crowns and scepters grow."

In the afternoon Grown-up Cousin called us, saying she was ready to go with us to look for our crowns and scepters. Little Sister put on her sunbonnet in such a hurry that she had the back frill on before, and I had to turn it right so she would not look as if she were walking backwards!

THE SARSAPARILLA VINE

With Grown-up Cousin leading the way we started for the land of crowns and scepters. And we learned that that land was our own home field!—for we found our crowns all growing in scarlet

splendor in the corners of the old rail fence.

Those scarlet crowns were made of vines of the sarsaparilla — vines that now hung thick with bunches of berries as beautiful as any clusters of polished coral. I found the first one, but I did not know that it was a crown until I called Grown-up Cousin to see the beautiful berries.

THE BERMUDA MULBERRY

"It is your crown," she said, and breaking the vine off at its roots she wound it, with all its sparkling clusters of berries, into a crown and laid it on my head. Then I felt proud indeed, because I was the first to be crowned queen.

When we were all crowned with scarlet glory, we began to wonder where our

scepters grew, but we did not need to wonder long, for Grown-up Cousin led us to a fence corner where grew a tall bush of Bermuda mulberry. The stout

VERY HAPPY LITTLE QUEENS

staves of the bush were now bare of leaves, and about each stiff staff grew clusters of magenta-colored berries — circles of berries growing at intervals all up and down the stem. These stems so

finely decked with berries made imposing scepters.

So, crowned and sceptered all, we walked home in the bright twilight, very happy little queens.

GEMS OF THE GROVE

When we had learned how jewels grew all about us, my little Sister and I, we all but forgot that it was Grown-up Cousin who had taught us to play at getting and setting gems, for we found so many berries and seeds of which we could make bracelets, brooches, and necklaces.

THE MOCK ORANGE

The little cousin from Tennessee made a chain of jet from the berries of the mock orange tree, berries black as jet.

The cousin from Georgia called the holly berries *rubies*, and we all made strings of those red "rubies."

For clusters of pearls we had the clear white berries of the mistletoe, but we had to wait till Christmas to wear those gems. The mistletoe grew so high that even the coast-country cousin would not venture to climb for them. But when the great clusters were brought down from the mighty oaks of our forest for Christmas decorations, then we gathered in our pearls.

HOLLY AND MISTLETOE

It was as we gathered these jewels and "set" them, or strung them, that we learned from Grown-up Cousin many things about the great and rare jewels of the earth. She told us something of the legends of some jewels over which even wars had been waged.

We kept our treasures in boxes and

showed them with pride to all who would examine them, and we were sure that our grove jewels were better than any other kind in all the world.

GARDEN RUBIES

I HAVE told something of our jewel box filled with garden gems. There was one deep red jewel, small and perfectly round, which for a long time was an enchanting mystery to little Sister and me. There was only one place in our garden where these small red things were to be found. It was near the fence where was a border of scraggy arbor vitae trees. When we first discovered the wee treasure on the moss bed, I rushed with it to Mother.

"What is it? Is it a real ruby? Is it worth four dollars? A million dollars? A thousand dollars?" I demanded all out of breath.

"No, it is not a ruby; it is not worth money," Mother said, "but it is beautiful and that is enough to make it valued. Perhaps it is a seed brought by a bird

from a long distance and dropped on the moss in our garden."

Brought from strange countries, and by a bird — how wonderful! Perhaps the little red thing had come from China and had crossed the ocean.

Just then little Sister came in with three more of the tiny red things. Three! All at once! We had a mine of beauty if not of wealth.

THE BRAMBLE VINE

Grown-up Cousin hurried with us to the moss bed to try to solve the mystery of our garden rubies, but she could find nothing more to suggest than the bird. Little Sister and I expected any day to look up into the scraggy arbor vitae border and see there some gorgeous

bird adorned with chains of those rubies, which he might drop at our feet. Or we hoped, and almost expected, to see the moss roll back and show the entrance to a glittering cavern where heaps and piles of red treasures awaited our eager hands.

At last, quite by accident, and in the simplest way possible, the mystery was solved. Over the row of scraggy arbor vitae scrambled a thorny bramble vine, with few scattered leaves, not good for anything in our garden plays. The bramble, after its homely kind, bore a few small bunches of dull berries. As it happened, one day I picked up one of those dusky berries fallen from the vine, and idly tore off the dull husk. Then — I gasped — vanished all mystery! When the wrinkled husk was off, there was the deep red, beautiful seed.

Of course I ran to the house at once to tell Mother and little Sister that I had found the ruby vine right in our

own yard, and that the vine was just a common old bramble that we had never noticed.

A few days later the memory of our

delight in the pretty mystery was fixed for all time, and it was Mother who gave us this happy memory! It was on Christmas eve, mild always in Alabama, and this day happily sunny, that she called us in from our play and, opening

a box just sent from the jeweler's, gave to each of us, my little Sister and myself, a tiny silver ring set with one of the deep red seeds from the ruby vine.

MIMOSA

There was always something happening in our garden — something most unexpected, yet something that we knew all about, my little Sister and I.

We knew just how the great mimosa trees looked when they bloomed, but somehow we never quite expected the wealth of roseate blossoms. Perhaps we were too busy with other joys to note the signs of budding, that promise of bloom. Yet suddenly our inclosed garden would be full of perfume — a perfume that drifted everywhere, like an invisible cloud of fragrance, into every cranny and corner of the garden. That drifting fragrance

MIMOSA BLOSSOMS

drew our eyes upward; and there, indeed, we saw a cloud of filmy globes, rose and yellow tinted, massed in the lacy leaves of the mimosa trees. Each little bloom was like a powder-puff. Each little bloom tickled cheek and

THE POWDERING ROOM

chin just as powder-puffs did when they were fluttered over us after our cool baths.

As soon as the mimosa bloomed, little Sister and I knew that it was the season to play "Ladies in the Boudoir."

So in our favorite garden nooks we made haste to set out toilet tables. I had a "powdering room," and little Sister had a "powdering room." I gave a "bal poudre" to which little Sister came; and little Sister gave a "bal poudre" to which I came. Our chief pleasure and business at these balls was to retire often to the "powdering rooms" and play powdering face and hair with the perfumed powder-puffs.

Such good times we had at our balls!

We went calling, also, in mimosa bloom season. Who could resist going calling with a new green lace hat, and that trimmed in pompons of rose! We called on the old goose sitting under the corner of the log storeroom. We called on the dog half asleep in his kennel. We called on the mocking-bird who had sung so many, many nights in the tall cedar that he was almost like a tame bird. He skipped about the limbs high above us and mocked the "cheep-cheep" of

young chickens while little Sister and I called upon him, wearing our best, very best spring bonnets.

Oh, it was fun when the mimosa bloomed!

WILD MIMOSA

THERE was also a wild mimosa that bloomed later, hanging fairy-like festoons of lacy vines down banks and roadsides — vines that had small filmy puffs, like plush buttons, up and down their length. These puff-balls, like those of the cultivated mimosa, were rose-tinted, but they were not fragrant.

WILD MIMOSA

The wild mimosa was so timid a little vine that it seemed strange to call it wild! Its very thorns, tiny and harmless, pricked with apologetic pricks. So frail a growth it was that it almost instantly wilted in the hand that gathered it.

Somewhere little Sister and I had learned that if the filmy leaves were struck sharply they would all at once close quite tightly over the delicate stem, as if to protect it from harm. We never taught this to the cousin from Georgia, or to the coast-country cousin, or to the other little cousins who came to visit us, because we just couldn't bear to frighten the beautiful plant, not even for play.

Grown-up Cousin told us that the wild mimosa is sometimes called the sensitive plant.

BONNETS

"Let's play leaf-ladies!" The coast-country cousin never tired of that play: dressing up in leaves.

"Oh, let's do!" cried the little cousin from Georgia, hopping up and down eagerly.

So we made ourselves dresses with long trains, sashes, capes, and what not, with leaves pinned together by thorns. But the prettiest leaf-garments of all were the ones my little Sister wore at our leaf-lady parties. That was because she was too tiny to make her own leaf-clothes and we would take more pains for her than for ourselves. In those prettiest of leaf-

dresses she looked as beautiful as any fairy of the woods.

The crowning joy of our leaf-costumes was always the bonnet. In no garden grew such bonnet-making material as the great cucumber tree bore for us! Only we were charged not to break *all* the huge leaves, but only one for each of us. Those leaves were a foot across and often three feet long. One leaf, looped over the head and tied under the chin with a long blade of guinea grass or with a green vine, made a bonnet that was shady, cool, and delightful to wear.

Mother told us that the cucumber tree is the same as the wild magnolia of our Southern hill country.

"Long ago," she said, "when that great cucumber tree was but a tiny shoot, one of our people brought it with him from the hill country and transplanted it here."

After that, whenever we were making

cucumber-leaf bonnets, we would say how glad we were that someone had cared enough for the baby cucumber tree to bring it from the hills and plant it in our garden.

CUCUMBER-LEAF BONNETS

FLOWER-MARKETING

"Does anybody want to buy 'butter'n' eggs'?"

"Has Mr. Crit Hass come?" cried the little coast-country cousin.

"DOES ANYBODY WANT TO BUY 'BUTTER'N' EGGS'?"

When Mr. Crit Hass came to sell butter and eggs, always riding a calico pony, it was the signal for all of us to gather in the basement dining-room,

where purchases from the country folk were conducted.

"Not that sort of butter'n' eggs," said a soft little voice. "I sell mine for pins."

Then we knew it was not real every-day selling, but the far more delightful play selling, so we began to hunt about for pins. It was a rule of the game that no one go to the pincushion for pins, and often we had to search a long time to find enough to do our shopping. But to-day when the little cousin from Tennessee had found three pins; and the cousin from Georgia had found no less than five; and when I had found one in the rug, we went to the door to buy—just whatever sort of butter'n' eggs were offered for sale.

There at the door stood little Sister dressed as a market woman: on her head a large cucumber-leaf bonnet, tied under the chin with grass-blade strings; on her arm a little Indian basket made of cane

and full of double daffodils. We always called them "butter'n' eggs," those double daffodils, with their fluffy-ruffle

SOUTHERN "BUTTER'N' EGGS"

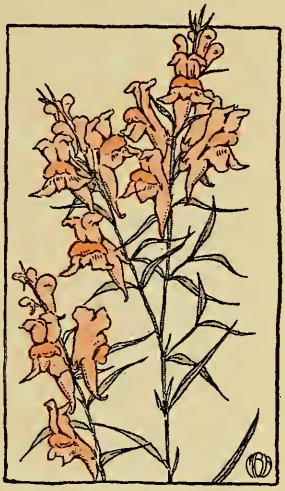
center of mingled dark and light yellow petals.

We bought out the basket, and then we were so pleased with the play of flower-marketing that we all went to gather bunches to sell to the grown folks for pins. Grown-up Cousin and Somebody seemed always quite ready to buy.

"I'll take four," said Somebody, feeling under the lapel of his coat for pins. The little coast-country cousin picked out the very nicest ones for him, and Somebody gave two of them to Grown-

up Cousin, who wasn't able to find a pin anywhere about her dress.

While little Sister fastened the flowers on Somebody's coat, he told us that quite another sort of flower is called "butter'n' eggs" by the children of the North. Immediately we ceased the marketing and gathered around Somebody, begging him to tell us a story about the North. He had lived in Massachusetts and had come from there to take care of the plantation office. There always had to be some man to keep the plantation office books, and we children were glad it was Somebody because we liked him so!



MASSACHUSETTS
"BUTTER'N' EGGS"

That day he told us that during the summer, along many a country road in

the North, the roadside glows in places with the yellow blossoms of a sort of wild snapdragon, which Northern children call "butter'n' eggs."

"WHERE are you?" I had not seen my little Sister for hours. I feared she was getting lonesome without *me*.

"Here I am!" Her high little voice came from some hidden spot in our garden.

"What are you doing?" I called, because now I knew that I felt lonely without *her*.

"Feeding little lambs!" Her voice sounded both excited and satisfied!

"Lambs?" I was already trying to guess the direction of her voice.

"Yes! Little red lambs!"

Whoever heard of little red lambs?

"Where did you get them? Who gave them to you!" I had now caught sight of her sitting under the pomegranate hedge.

"I found them. I made them. Here they are!" By this time I had reached

her and she was showing me a row of the fallen fruit ends of the scarlet pomegranate blooms. Those fallen calyxes had lost their crumpled corollas; so they would never bear fruit, but they still held their gorgeous color and their mystic seven points.

POMEGRANATE BLOSSOMS AND FRUIT

Little Sister had broken off all but two of the points. Those two together stuck up quite like ears, and the stem end down in the grass did look something like the nibbling nose of a wee red lamb.

It was a brand new play of her own, and now we tried all sorts of experiments with the fallen flowers. Sometimes we left four points on; then the heads seemed to wear horns as well as ears.

When we carried the "heads" into the house and with pen and ink marked eyes and little lines about the nose-tips, our lambs and kids were made to look some of them frolicsome, some shy, some frisky, and some really fierce.

And so, during the flowering season of the pomegranate hedge, Sister and I made the little red lambs and made believe feed them.

A GIFT FROM THE PRIDE OF CHINA TREES

"HURRAH! Hurrah! The Pride of China trees are blooming!"

One of those joyfully recognized, but always unexpected surprises of childhood was upon us. The air was full of a new fragrance. We wanted bunches, bunches, and bunches of those lovely blooms, with which to make amethyst necklaces.

"Oh, how can we get them? How can we get them?" cried the coast-country cousin gazing up into the blue and purple blossom-clouds that seemed to cover all our play world.

"If we could climb, really truly climb!" —the little cousin from Georgia spread her arms about the big China tree, but they did not reach halfway round.

"We must get someone who *can* climb," said the cousin from Tennessee.

"Let little Sister go," said the cousin from north Alabama, who visited us less often than any other cousin, but who

MAKING THE NECKLACES

had learned that my little Sister's requests were almost never refused.

"Little Sister, will you ask?" begged the coast-country cousin.

"Ask? — what? — who?" said puzzled little Sister.

"For someone to climb for us," explained the coast-country cousin.

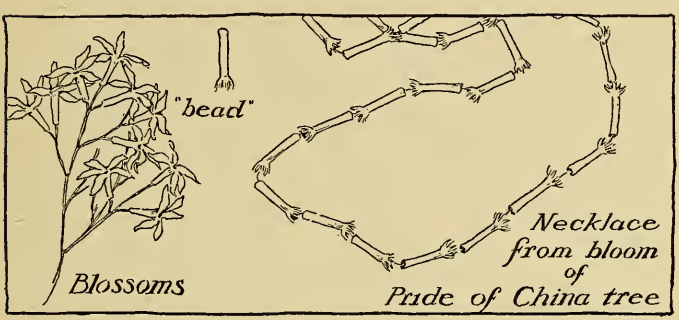
"For one of the dining-room boys," said the cousin from Georgia.

"For Yellow Tom," said the cousin from Tennessee, who was always plain-spoken, "he has just finished rubbing the knives."

So little Sister went to the house and asked, and Yellow Tom was sent. Grown-up Cousin came, too, to be with us while the gathering went on. Yellow Tom, grinning and happy, "shinned up" the trees one after another. He pulled, and broke, and threw down boughs from this tree and from that, and would never have wanted to stop, but Grown-up Cousin stopped him when we had wagon loads of the clustering blossoms. The big cloud-like masses above us looked not one bit thinner, although when we dragged our branches together under one tree we seemed surrounded by a great drift of bloom.

Then Yellow Tom went back to his work, Grown-up Cousin left us to join the other grown-ups, and we children began to make amethyst necklaces.

This is the way we did it. In each

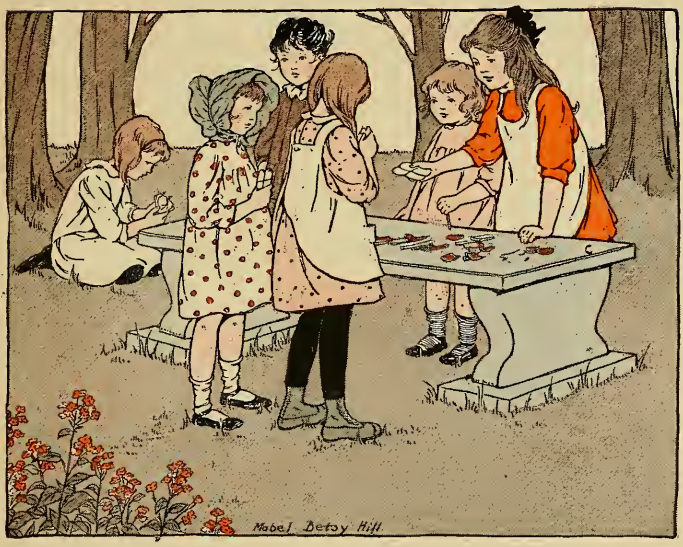


blue corolla there was a purple center. This center was on a slight green stamen running from the base of the corolla to the tip of the tube-like center. This purple shaded center we called the "bead." Its tube-like formation made it all ready for stringing. We had learned to draw the bead carefully from the green stamen in the center of the pale blue flower, and there it was — a shaded purple bead with a hole already through!

Only a little care, and these beads were strung on what we called "long-thread needles," and behold chain after chain of fairy-fine necklaces! These were the springtime gifts from the Pride of China trees.

SHOPPING

"I live on Easy Street—"
"Where money grows on trees—"
"I have all I can spend—"
"For anything I please."



SHOPPING

We used to make up songs like that as we got ready for a morning of shopping. One little cousin would sing the first line, another would sing the second, and so on.

This particular morning the coast-country cousin and the cousin from Tennessee were the ones to set out the bargain counters to tempt the rest of us. They were busily arranging their wares — broken crockery, prisms from old chandeliers, rosy pebbles, blue pebbles, and many other things we valued.

Meanwhile the rest of us were gathering in the "coin of the realm," as Somebody called the play money. One small rose leaf was a penny; a violet leaf was a nickel; a bay leaf, a quarter of a dollar; a magnolia leaf, a dollar.

When the coast-country cousin and the cousin from Tennessee had "sold out," then we possessed the treasures, and they the heaps of money. So next day the little cousin from Georgia and I set out the bargains. The cousin from north Alabama and little Sister were clerks. The coast-country cousin and the cousin from Tennessee gathered the "money

that grows on trees," and came to do the shopping.

Once Somebody shopped with us and taught us about English coins and what each one is worth in American money. We learned to shop quite readily with those make-believe pennies, shillings, and pounds, though all our leaf-money was really nothing but "greenbacks," as Somebody laughingly told us.

MAKING BUTTERFLIES

THERE was no game that we loved more than making butterflies. When the bright autumn leaves were falling and drifting everywhere, we gathered these

BUTTERFLIES

leaves by the apronful — some red, some yellow, some spotted, as are the wings of butterflies. Then we picked plenty of brown, prickly cockle-burs. To make a butterfly we fastened one of those gay autumn leaves on each side of a bur, using slender thorns for pins. There! Our play butterflies looked wonderfully real!

"If only they could fly!" exclaimed the coast-country cousin.

Thereupon the cousin from Tennessee threw her butterfly up in the air and away it sailed. It chanced to light on the shoulder of my little Sister, and there the pretty thing fluttered with every move she made. It waved its leaf-wings gently with every passing breeze. We cried out in delight, one and all of us. Little Sister was the most delighted of all. Then we made butterflies quickly and tossed them toward her, trying to toss one onto her other shoulder. A great one with wings of golden leaves lit on her arm. Oh, how graceful it looked as it fluttered there! We made butterflies as fast as we could — and we threw them, with careful aim, at little Sister until dozens of the beautiful things clung to her apron.

Then we led her to the grown folks, for them to see. When they saw how pretty and dainty she looked, with her dress all decked with the fluttering butterflies, they, too, cried out delightedly, just as we children had done.

After that we loved the game more than ever. We made hundreds of the leaf butterflies and threw them to light on one another's skirts, being careful never to let a cockle-bur butterfly get into a little girl's hair.

When our dresses were trimmed with the bright, wavy things, we went shopping, or calling, and sometimes we even played at having a ball.

CHINKAPINS

"WHICH nuts do you like best?" asked the little coast-country cousin.

"I believe I like walnuts best of all," answered the cousin from Georgia.

"They're all so black and dirty! They're all so black and dirty!" sang the cousin from Tennessee, because the walnuts we spoke of were the great black ones with the rusty, rough coats.

"But they are good to eat and taste best," declared the cousin from Georgia.

"Only you can't make anything of them," said the north Alabama cousin, except nut cake, and candy, and pickle."

"And that's enough!" exclaimed one little cousin.

"But we mean toys like the hickory-nut women, and the cradles and boats," said the cousin from north Alabama.

"We can't expect to play with *everything!*" asserted the coast-country cousin.

"There are scaly-barks," suggested little Sister.

"Just like the hickory nuts, only nicer," added the coast-country cousin.

"And the pecans!" from the Tennessee cousin. "We can play making pigs with them, making them as we do lemon pigs; but they are so hard to make!"

"Oh, the chinkapins!" sang my little Sister.

At that, all of us clapped our hands, a happy chorus, for that very morning Grown-up Cousin had told us that chinkapins were opening and that if Somebody could be spared from the plantation office business she and he would take us to the edge of the big woods where the chinkapin trees grew. There Somebody, with a pole, would thrash down some of the nuts. That would be joy for us, oh, such joy!

"And we will look for chinkapins!" cried the little cousin from Tennessee.

"And chinkapins will look *at* us!" said the coast-country cousin, opening her eyes wide and shrinking her shoulders.

"Oo! Oo! Ooo! Ooo-ooo!" cried we all.

"Aren't their eyes bright?"

"Don't they peep sharply out from behind those prickly eyelashes?"

"Dozens of black eyes in each bunch of burs!"

"LIKE BRIGHT EYES"

"And when they drop out from the burs to the ground at the thrashing, then—!"

"Don't they peep up at us from the leaves!"

"Don't tell!"

"We won't tell!"

That was what we said one to another when the season came round for the burs to open. No eyes ever looked brighter to us than the chinkapins looked as they shone down at us from the open and half-opened burs, or shone up at us

from the leaves and the moss beds. We looked *for* them, and they looked *at* us. But only to us did those bright nuts look like eyes. Even to Grown-up Cousin they were only nuts. We never told her how those chinkapins played peep-bo at us, for that was one of our secrets!

That afternoon we had our chinkapin hunt according to promise. When the hunt was over, we counted our "hundreds." That was the way we always counted chinkapins — by hundreds. The success of the hunt was determined by the number of hundreds of chinkapins gathered in.

While the chinkapins were fresh and raw, they sparkled brightly, and we made long necklaces of them — strings that reached, if there were many hundreds, far down, even to our waists and sometimes below.

As the chinkapins dried, the shells became duller, but the kernels within became sweeter. The nuts when boiled

looked duller still; they were delicious to eat, however — so mealy-tasting! Sometimes we boiled the nuts after we had strung them. Then, though our necklaces were quite dull, we thought them almost as pretty as the sparkling ones. But whichever way we used them, they were "very tasty necklaces," as Grown-up Cousin said!

CHESTNUTS AND CHINKAPINS

"The chestnuts are looking at us," cried the little cousin from Georgia.

A CHESTNUT AND A CHINKAPIN

"With big sleepy eyes," sang the coast-country cousin.

"We'll go pick up the eyes when they drop out of the sockets," said the cousin from Tennessee.

"And the eyelashes hang empty on the trees," chimed in the north Alabama cousin.

"That scares me," said little Sister, hiding her face in my white apron.

"What's the matter?" asked Grown-up Cousin, who was walking just then to the circular seat beneath the largest of the chestnut trees, where the grove meets the foot of our garden.

We all made a little secret sign that meant among ourselves: "Don't tell!"

Of course not one of us would have told, not for mints of money, not even my little Sister. We always preserved our secrets. If the grown-up people did not sense that sleepy gaze that fell from the half-opened bur of a chestnut and recognize those bright glances of the chinkapins, it was no business of ours to tell them. If nuts were just nuts to them, and not eyes, that was their affair.

"We were talking of chestnuts," said the little cousin from Georgia.

"We think they must be opening," said the cousin from Tennessee.

"Let's go see," cried the north Alabama cousin.

"If you will bring me a large chestnut and five chinkapins," said Grown-up Cousin, "I will show you how to make cats and mice dwell together in amity."

There were no chinkapin trees in the grove; so we ran to the house for the left-over nuts that we had not used the day before when stringing our chin-

kapin beads. Grown-up Cousin had told us that for "cats and mice in amity" she must have chinkapins through which no needle had passed. When we had

MAKING "CATS AND MICE IN AMITY"

found five such nuts, we hurried back to the circular seat where Grown-up Cousin, still busy with her sewing, was waiting for us. We dropped the chinkapins into her lap and ran to look for the needed big chestnut. It did not take us long to find that one and more.

"Now cats!" cried the cousin from Georgia as she put three fat chestnuts in Grown-up Cousin's hand.

"And mice," said the coast-country cousin, adding two others.

"A card—" said Grown-up Cousin, "has anyone a card?"

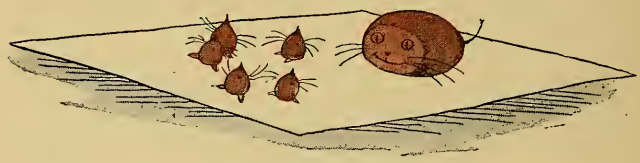
Now which of us *would* have a card out under the chestnut tree! It seemed that there must be another trip to the house before we could see, "cats and mice in amity"—whatever that meant!

But often help comes at the last ditch, so we had heard. And sure enough, Somebody came along and gave Grown-up Cousin an unused stiff envelope; by cutting it carefully she made the plain side serve for a card.

Upon this card Grown-up Cousin sewed the largest one of the chestnuts we had brought her. On the broad end of the nut she drew a cat's face.

Some threads run through the face on each side, but clipped so as to stand out

stiff, made fierce moustaches upon Sir Cat. The little tail of the pointed end of the chestnut swung out on the card, and Grown-up Cousin said: "There is your cat, tail and all."



"CAT AND MICE IN AMITY"

Then Grown-up Cousin sewed to the card five chinkapins with their points sticking up. With her fountain pen she drew on the card funny little ears, two to each chinkapin, ears pointing this way and that way. She happened to have some ends of colored pencils in her workbasket; so she chose a red stub and drew eyes on the chinkapins. Through the tips of the nuts she ran threads for whiskers.

"There are your mice!" said Grown-up Cousin.

Sure enough, those Chinkapins looked

just like little mice peeping up out of holes at Sir Cat, who was all agrin between his whiskers.

"Now you see cat and mice in lasting friendship," said Grown-up Cousin. So, without asking, we learned the meaning of *amity*.

We ran as fast as we could to the house to find more chinkapins loose from strings, and to ask for cards, and to get pencils. Then what a wonderful time we had making our own "cats and mice in amity"!

"HEAR our money! Hear our money!"

Of course we had to listen when the little coast-country cousin said that. We were in the midst of a great sedge field, and we all remembered that Somebody had told us that such sedge is worth nothing at all. Worth nothing! — yet from our windows they glistened like gold, those fields of sedge! Whenever we reached them in our walks, we would be newly surprised to find those fields dull colored like coarse, dry grass, without any golden luster.

Well, here was the coast-country cousin, who surely had left home with empty hands, shaking her closed fists and crying: "Hear our money! Hear our money!" She said *our* money, not *my* money. We were not surprised at that, for the coast-country cousin was always ready to divide any treasure found. Now

surely she had found money, or something that sounded like money, for as she shook her fists, something within did rattle like a handful of picayunes — or maybe like silver three-cent pieces. Anyway it was treasure trove in the sedge field, and we all started to search for hidden wealth.

"Easy money in early autumn!" laughed Grown-up Cousin.

We had been told that little if anything will grow in an old sedge field; but now looking carefully we did see something growing here and there amidst the tufts of rough sedge between the water rows that wrinkled the ground. It was a small wild vetch with its wee pink bloom — just a bright pea flower, worth but little more than the sedge. But as our feet touched the vetch vines, we heard an odd rattling sound. We soon discovered that the rattle came from the ripe pods, which looked like small oblong boxes, some dark brown, some al-

most black. We called them rattle-boxes, those queer seed pods of the vetch! Of course, we all began to hunt for rattle-boxes and to shout, "Hear our money!" as we shook them in our fists.

VETCH BLOSSOMS AND SEED PODS

In order to secure the best "rattlers," we had to be very careful as we picked them to choose those that were ripe enough, but not too ripe, for those that were not ripe enough would not rattle clearly, and those that were too ripe popped open and spilled the seed.

So here was the source of that sound as of jingling coin and wealth — almost worthless vetch, perhaps, but what joy it brought us!

THE HYACINTH SPELL

It was when the earliest flowers of our garden were blooming. The little cousin from Tennessee was puzzled about the way flowers kept blooming and blooming even though grown-up people had kept saying it was winter. And now she came skipping down the garden walk singing: "I can spell! I can spell!" As she sang, she kept swinging a staff of hyacinth bells, swinging that staff of bells back and forth as if they really could ring. But even though they could

not sound a single note, they did send out a most delicious fragrance.

"I can spell!" that cousin from Tennessee kept singing till all of us had heard her.

"It's not time for lessons," said the little cousin from Georgia.

"L-u-c-i-n-d-a A-l-i-c-i-a B-r-o-w-n!" spelled the cousin from Tennessee, and then she cried, "Eighteen!" as if it were Arithmetic time, too!

"That's nothing!" pouted the cousin from Georgia, for it was her name that the Tennessee cousin had spelled.

"It's *not* nothing!" cried the Tennessee cousin. "It is a very sweet name of a nice little girl," and she began again, putting a rosy finger tip on each hyacinth bell as she sang the letters: "L-u-c-i-n-d-a—"

"Oh, I see!" and now the cousin from Georgia was as pleased as she had been teased before at the calling out of the letters of her own name.

"Oh, I see, too!" cried the coast-country cousin, and she ran to the hyacinth border looking for a staff of bells that would spell: "A-r-a-m-i-n-t-a A-r-e-t-h-u-s-a C-a-r-r."

Then one by one we all cried, "Oh, I see!" and ran to the borders where hyacinths were blooming, looking each one for a staff of bells that would spell her own, her very own name, or the name of the one she loved most.

HYACINTH BLOSSOMS

"Oh, I think this is the best of plays!" exclaimed the little cousin from Georgia. And Grown-up Cousin, who had been watching us, smilingly added:

"It is a play that counts!"

Presently the littlest cousin ran to where we were searching the borders.

When she saw what we were doing, she called: "Me, too!" Little Sister, running hand in hand with her, cried: "Put a spell on me, too!"

So it was that ever after that we called finding staves of hyacinth bells that spelled names: "Putting on a spell." It was a sweet, powerful spell of love upon anyone who was very dear to us.

It was not strange that a stem with six bells spelled for every one of us the name that was sweetest and dearest to each — different for each one of us, maybe, but sweetest and dearest to all — for the word that the six bells spelled was always: M–O–T–H–E–R.

"Chick-chick! Chick-oo-oo!" chirped the little cousin from Georgia.

"Why do you say that?" asked the cousin from Tennessee.

"Because the chickweed is in bloom."

"Still I don't see why you call chickens," pouted the little cousin from Tennessee, who did not like to be puzzled.

"Because Grown-up Cousin told me yesterday that the little white star flowers are like wee chicks. The plant is like the mother hen, and at night, or in the daytime when it's raining, the plant folds its leaves about the tiny blossoms just as the hen covers her brood; that is what Grown-up Cousin said."

It was wonderful, we thought. We almost — almost, not quite — wished for rain, that we might see the plant care for its little white star blooms. At the hint of a cloud we used to run to the

unweeded places in the garden and inclosure and watch the leaves fold about the flower. That was play for us all the short season that the little weedling bloomed.

We only half forgot the chickweed and its tender, loving ways when the bluets opened. They came so suddenly, just a faint tint of blue on the grass, as if the home field had caught a reflection from the far-off sky. How we did love those tiny stars of blue! When Somebody told us they were called quaker-ladies where he lived, we thought how sweet the real Quaker ladies must be to have those dainty blooms named for them: quaker-ladies!

BLUETS

Just after the bluets came the evening primrose. We called it a buttercup. But Somebody told us we were wrong.

It was a primrose, a rough, tough little primrose. It was a brave little bloom. It opened up its yellow disk as the sun set. We thought it had a bold and worthy desire to keep alive, through the night hours, the memory and the likeness of the golden and round sun that had slipped away out of sight.

A PRIMROSE

One afternoon while we were half thinking, half talking our fancies about the small flowers, which we were gathering in great bunches, the cousin from north Alabama asked:

"Do you love butter?"

What could she mean, we wondered — the coast-country cousin and I, who were farthest from her?

"Do you love butter?" she asked again, running to my little Sister and

holding one of the primroses under her chin. Then answering her own question, the north Alabama cousin exclaimed:

"Yes, you do love butter!"

"I do," said little Sister soberly.

"How did you know?" I demanded, for I had come up, as always, to know everything, just everything that happened ever, anywhere, to my little Sister. But instead of replying to my question, the north Alabama cousin poked a primrose under *my* chin, saying:

"DO YOU LOVE BUTTER?"

"Do *you* love butter?"

Before I had time to answer, she declared:

"Yes, you do — because your chin is yellow when I hold the buttercup under it!"

So that was it!

We liked that play, and we held the little primrose up first under this one's chin, and then under that one's chin, calling, "Do you love butter?" until we were called in to get bread and butter—with honey on it!

BLUE TOADFLAX

Later in the summer the blue toadflax bloomed in our old field. We had no play for this. We only fancied that the frogs had started to spin flax at night; that morning had caught them at their task, so they had left their work hastily; then somehow the shuttles of half-wound flax had turned into delicate blue flowers growing on slender stems.

One day when we had gathered our bunches of toadflax, we strolled farther down the field.

"Oh," cried the coast-country cousin, "here is rabbit tobacco!"

We all gathered around her as she picked a fuzzy leaf from a small white-green weed.

"What is it good for?" asked the cousin from Tennessee.

"Do rabbits really smoke it?" inquired the north Alabama cousin.

"I'm sure I don't know," the coast-country cousin replied. "I don't suppose they do. But this is good for a play."

"What? Tell us what," cried the cousin from Tennessee.

"It's good to answer questions."

"Whose questions?"

"Anyone's," the coast-country cousin told us.

"I'll ask it one," declared the cousin from Tennessee.

"Do," said the coast-country cousin.

"Is it going to rain to-day? I am sure it is."

"Now look!" commanded the coast-

country cousin. She held the whitish green leaf in thumb and forefinger of her left hand and took its other end in thumb and forefinger of the right hand and gently pulled the leaf in two parts. The leaf was so young and its fibers so strong that it broke but slowly and its broken edges were as ragged as if it had been woven of cotton fibers. We all looked with interest at the breaking of the leaf.

"It answers: Yes," said the coast-country cousin, "so we shall have to hurry home!"

RABBIT TOBACCO

But we stayed a few minutes to ask questions of the answering leaves that we had just found.

If the leaf were young, and if the fingers pulled very carefully, making ragged edges, the answer was always: Yes. If the leaf were older, and if the

fingers pulled quickly, making the torn edges straighter, then the leaf snapped: No. We learned that in our play with the leaves of the weed we called rabbit tobacco.

"Sweet, sweet, sweet! Do you want to smell something sweet?" The little cousin from Georgia ran toward us with hands behind her back.

"Of course we do. *I* do," answered the cousin from Tennessee, coming forward with her pert turned-up nose ready for a whiff of sweetness.

The cousin from Georgia swiftly whisked from behind her a full-blown white lily. We had not known that they were blooming. The Tennessee cousin bent farther over to smell, and the cousin from Georgia touched the lily against her nose.

"There!" When the cousin from Tennessee looked up in surprise at the thrust, the tip of her nose was as yellow as gold!

"It's a play," explained the cousin from Georgia hastily, for she feared that

she might have hurt the feelings of the Tennessee cousin.

"Oh, I see," cried the coast-country

GOLDEN NOSES

cousin, coming gallantly into the play, "but nobody knows you with your golden nose!"

"Let's all go get golden noses!" cried the cousin from north Alabama. So we hastened to the lily line where, sure enough, many lilies showed their golden hearts held fast in their long, white finger-petals — or it seemed to us they did, those lilies. Up and down the line

we went, thrusting our own faces into the lilies, or having them pushed in by a hand behind us — for we had all begun to think it fun by this time — until every nose among us was as yellow as gold. Then we ran to show Grown-up Cousin the result of our new play.

"Why," she cried when she saw us coming, "you must have found where the goose lays her golden eggs and have all peeped into the nest!"

Then she told us a pretty story of the stamen and the pollen of lilies, explaining that the white cups of the lilies do indeed hold, as it were, nests full of golden eggs to bring to earth a wealth of beauty and perfume.

So after that we played our game *sometimes*, and here and there, with lilies on the line. We took care not to spoil *all* the golden eggs in the snow-white nests.

SWEET SHRUBS

"Sweet shrubs in bloom!" my little Sister smiled at us out of the depths of her white sunbonnet.

"Then it is sure-enough spring," declared the coast-country cousin.

There is not any odor more alluring than the perfume of the little brown flower that grows wild along the branches, or brooks, of Alabama — the sweet shrub.

Somebody had told us that the plant had been transplanted and was to be found in gardens as far north as Long Island, and that it was there called calycanthus. We thought that very interesting, and we wondered if our little wild flower felt at home in those far gardens and if it smelled as sweet by that other name.

Anyway, it seemed real spring to us when we could go to the small streams

that ran through our fields and inclosures and there look for sweet shrubs. How beautifully exciting it was to us to catch the first faint odor of the blossoms! Then the joy of the hunt, as we darted here, there, everywhere, through the fresh green of new-leafed shrubs! Oh, the delight of coming upon a bush taller than any one of us — taller than Grown-up Cousin, who was quite tall — taller even than Somebody, who was taller still — a bush full of brown blossoms, small and sweet!

CALYCANTHUS

We had a way of gathering these blooms without the stems and tying bunches of them in our handkerchiefs.

"It is a heathenish way to do with flowers!" exclaimed Somebody.

"It is not so heathenish," declared Grown-up Cousin, defending our South-

ern way. "It is just making sachet-bags."

"Oh, I see," said Somebody.

"But we have another way," the little cousin from north Alabama told him. As she said that, she plucked and handed Somebody a spray of sweet shrub with seven blooms on it. Grown-up Cousin smilingly touched the blossoms one after the other, and as she touched them she said in order the letters of Somebody's Christian name.

SWEET SHRUB SACHET

"Oh, I see," Somebody said again. "That is a pretty custom!"

What a good time we had gathering sweet shrubs for sachets, and also in sprays to spell our own and each others' names!

REINS

CLOVER REINS

"Clover's come," announced the cousin from Georgia. She was so keen-eyed that she was nearly always the first to find the new blooms. "In the near field," she added, waving her hand for us to follow, and now she was away to gather the blooms.

We had a fine play with the clovers that grew in the rich "near field"—those clovers with the long, strong stems. We gathered the blossoms with all the length of the stem. Then we tied a stem about a flower, then a stem about a flower, again and again and again, until we had a long string of green stems evenly dotted with white clover blooms.

These were our reins. With these reins, flowery fair and light, we made believe drive wild horses over the near field and sometimes to the very door of the house and within. Our wild horses were ourselves! Oh, it was fun to be a prancing, dancing pony, shaking glossy locks and curls for tossing manes! But it was just as much fun to hold the reins, and bid the fiery steed go here, go there!

So we worked in pairs when we made our clover chains for reins: a horse and a driver working together. Then we took turns at the reins, each one playing first horse and then driver. That was a jolly play, which lasted all clover-bloom time.

WILLOW WHIPS

"I MUST have a whip. My horse is so frisky!" The little cousin from Georgia never knew stop or stay to her play.

MAKING WILLOW WHIPS

She was always thinking-up, inventing, adding to her games.

"Not to whip with!" The coast-country cousin was always quick with kindness.

"Oh, no, of course not, 'cause I'm a frisky pony myself."

"Just to snap!" suggested the cousin from Tennessee.

"I remember I heard Somebody say that he made fine willow whips when he was a boy," the cousin from north Alabama reminded us.

"As soon as he leaves the office, let's ask him to show us how he made them," cried the cousin from Georgia.

And so we did.

And so he did.

After he had cut many long, slim willow switches, he seated himself on a grassy bank above the sandy river-bottom where the willows grew, and with the bundle of switches beside him, showed us this way to make willow whips:

First he peeled back the green bark of the switches in four sections, as far as the handle of the whip was to come. Next he cut carefully from the handle that portion of the wood from which the bark had been peeled, leaving still

on the staff the long four sections, or strings, of bark. Then, while he held the handle firmly, Grown-up Cousin braided the strips of green willow bark into a stout four-plait.

A WILLOW WHIP — MAKING AND MADE

When we girls tried the plaiting, we found that it must be done with great care so that the strips of new bark should not be broken from the handle.

They were fine toys when well made, those green willow whips!

IN THE ROSE HEDGES

THERE were hedges of Cherokee roses all about the plantation; but they were so briary that they did not seem to us children good for much except for guineas to lay their eggs in. When the many guinea hens chose to make nests away back in the dark, thorny recesses of those hedges, the eggs were pretty sure not to be disturbed — no, not even with a long-handled gourd hollowed out, for that was the only safe and sure way to take eggs from a guinea-nest and not disturb the speckled hen.

THE GOURD VINE

Those Cherokee hedges, with their earliest spring and summer-long beauty of white-star-rose bloom, we called "quite-wild" hedges. The hedges we liked best were the half-wild ones on the outer reaches of our garden. These were

rich with the big blossoms of the Baltimore Belle, the Solfatara, and the Malmaison. They were beginning to bloom now, great, odorous blossoms hanging out over cedar limbs and over swinging sprays of vine.

"Let's sell candy!" suggested the little cousin from Tennessee.

"What sort?" asked the cousin from Georgia.

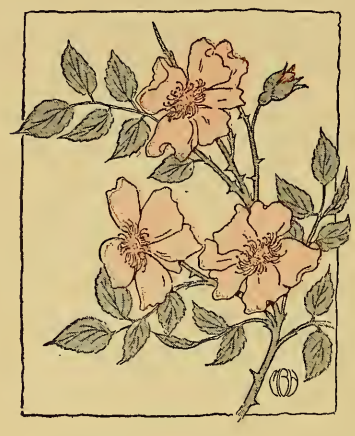
"Rose-candy," the Tennessee cousin explained.

Then we ran to our favorite play-place under the half-wild rose hedges and began to cut rose-candy. Every Southern child knows what rose-candy is — those succulent rosy or yellow shoots that the rose tree or vine puts forth for the next year's growth and blooming.

GOURD DIPPER

"I have a good lot," said the cousin from Georgia, showing her sticks of candy evenly cut and done up in pack-

ages as real candy is in stores; and we knew, every one of us, the sweetish acid taste of that rose-candy.



"Now let's sell," said the cousin from Tennessee.

"Sell what?" It was Grown-up Cousin who asked the question. She happened to be coming, at that moment, through a gap in the half-wild rose hedges.

"Rose-candy!" we exclaimed in a chorus, delighted to find a customer so soon. But instead of buying our wares Grown-up Cousin cried out in dismay:

"Oh, dreadful! dreadful!"

We had done something wrong — we wondered what!

"Oh, sad, sad, sad!" repeated Grown-up Cousin.

The rose-candy wilted in our hands as

she told us how much bloom and fragrance we had filched from the future by cutting all that rose-candy.

"Never mind," she said, seeing how sorry we felt. Grown-up Cousin never could bear to see anybody in trouble. "I will teach you a play that will neither hurt nor harm," she continued, "and it is a sort of bang! fire! pop! play, too!"

We were eager at once to know of a play like that.

"Now, each one of you bring me the biggest rose you can find," said Grown-up Cousin. "Let it be nearly ready to shatter."

My little Sister brought hers first — a handful of crumpled petals, for she had no sooner seized the bloom of a rose than it had shattered in her soft little hand.

"See here," said Grown-up Cousin, and she took one of the largest petals and carefully folded it into a little bag, or balloon. Then, "May I?" she asked

with a smile and struck it on little Sister's forehead.

"Pop!" The petal broke with a sound like a shot.

We all ran up with our full-blown roses, and Grown-up Cousin showed each of us how to fold a petal into a balloon and how to shoot off that balloon by striking it on forehead or chin or the back of a tightly closed hand. Often, after that, we played bang! fire! pop! in the rose hedges, and Grown-up Cousin called it our "War of the Roses."

ROSE PETALS

THE ROSE-JAR

"Are you gathering rose petals to play bang! fire! pop!?" my little Sister asked Grown-up Cousin as she went about filling a small basket with the petals of roses ready to shatter. At the same time she picked off also the stem where the roses had been, and threw that to the earth.

"No," answered Grown-up Cousin, "I am going to make a *potpourri* of rose petals, spices, and volatile salts." She was going to put the petals all in a rose-jar, she told us, and carefully seal up the jar; then next year, and the year after that, and for many years beyond, she could open the jar and catch the fragrance of the very roses that the little

cousins had seen in flower during their happy bygone playtimes.

"How fine!" said the cousin from Tennessee, and we planned at once to fill a rose-jar ourselves.

Grown-up Cousin told us, also, how we could scatter daily in our bureau drawers and our boxes and trunks a few petals of roses about to shatter or already wilting, and how the petals would perfume faintly every article of clothing in those receptacles. She told us that at the end of summer we could gather up all those petals thus slowly dried in darkness, and could fill a pillow with them. Then all winter long that pillow would hold the fragrance of spring.

Later she showed us how to make a confection of rose petals by dropping the freshest, "ripest" ones with a quick, deft fling into boiling sugar-syrup. These lifted out — oh, so carefully — were found to retain their color, to be finely crumpled, and to be coated with

a crisp frost of sparkling crystallized sugar. Rose-candy that, indeed!

Later, much later, the same Grown-up Cousin showed little Sister and me how to make lovely beads of rose petals.

Thus the frail rose petals would prolong for us many of the delights of the springtime and the long summer days.

VIOLET BALLS

"The whole place is blue!" the little cousin from Tennessee cried delightedly. Ever since the Christmas holidays she had been asking, "When is winter coming?"—because in Alabama throughout the winter months the forests and groves are green with magnolia, mock orange, and other evergreen trees; also, because every day of the year flowers bloomed in our Alabama garden. Now she had announced excitedly that something, the whole of something, was blue!

It was the violet border! There were violets of many sorts in that garden. There was the small sparkling kind, blooming abundantly, but sending forth scarcely any fragrance. Then there were the dim blue ones, the most fragrant of all; tiny and crumpled they were, hiding all but their perfume under round, woolly leaves. Those that the little

cousin from Tennessee had found so blue were the long-stemmed, large-flowered ones.

We had no play for the violets, unless it was to make a single one serve for a flower-lady's hat: a hat of crumpled purple velvet placed on the stem of a rose set upside down.

A VIOLET BALL

Our chief delight was making violet balls: round bunches of bloom with never a leaf of green. While we were making them, we decided among ourselves as to the person to whom each one should give her particular ball, for an important part of our play of violet balls was the presentation of the ball to the "Most Loved One."

My little Sister and I had no question of choice. We both presented our violet balls to Mother; only we ran as fast as we could to see which one could

reach that dear goal first. That was one time when I would not wait for little Sister! With the cousins who were staying with us there was the excitement of

FOR OUR "MOST LOVED ONE"

choice — unless their mothers also were visiting us.

On that day when the borders were so blue, the coast-country cousin had a most novel fancy. "Oh," she said, "I believe I shall give my violet ball to Somebody!"

"Do you love him best?" inquired the cousin from north Alabama.

"No-o, not exactly," the little coast-country cousin replied, putting her head on one side to examine her blue ball carefully to be sure that it was perfectly round, "but I love him — well enough."

So, according to our custom, we walked a little way behind her as she started toward the plantation office to tap at Somebody's door. Then we followed the cousin from north Alabama, who had decided to give her violet ball to Grown-up Cousin. We knew that Grown-up Cousin had gone that morning to read Bible chapters to some old colored people — so old that they would hardly ever leave their one-room houses. We started in the direction she had gone, and soon met her on her way home, her red Bible in her hand.

She said the presentation of the violet ball made her very happy. We walked back toward the house with her, and as we passed the plantation office Somebody joined us. He said that he too

had been made happy by the gift of a violet ball.

Then it was time for little Sister and me to run our race to the house to give our violet balls to Mother, who was that day and always our "Most Loved One."

DAISY PLAYS

"How lovely, how perfectly lovely!" exclaimed the little cousin from Tennessee as she swung out one end of the daisy chain that Somebody was teaching us to make. Our chain would not be a very long one, he told us, because with us the white daisies with the golden centers grew in borders planted in our garden, and not wild, like the daisies he used to pick in Massachusetts when he was a boy.

"In the North," he said, "daisies grow in great numbers, fields and fields all white with them! There they are sometimes called whiteweed." We had never heard daisies called whiteweed.

As Somebody kept working and the chain kept growing in length, we thought it might

not be so short a chain, after all; but he told us how daisy chains many rods long are used in certain Northern college festivals. So we begged him for a story of those college daisy chains. When he had finished telling us about the daisies of the North, the little Georgia cousin said:

"We call our daisies marguerites!"

That reminded us of a play we liked, and the coast-country cousin was quick to suggest: "Let's play marguerite!" Thereupon she skipped to the daisy border, which was in full bloom, and picked one of the finest blossoms.

"Will it rain to-morrow? Will it rain to-morrow?" she questioned the daisy anxiously. As Grown-up Cousin and Somebody had promised to take us picnicking on the morrow, we gathered about the coast-country cousin and waited breathlessly while she pulled out the petals one by one, saying, "It will —it won't—it will—it won't— it will —" in quick succession till all the

petals but one were pulled. Then, "It won't!" she cried triumphantly as she pulled the very last petal; and we all danced for joy at the daisy's answer!

We had long had a daisy play of our own. We showed it to Somebody, who said he thought it quite cunning. Our play was called little grandmas, and this was the way we played it:

We chose a daisy with a smooth center. First with scissors we neatly trimmed the petals on the upper half of the blossom, leaving a narrow, stiff frill half way round. From the other half of the daisy we pulled all the petals except the two middle ones. Then with pen and ink we drew a face — eyes, nose, mouth — on the yellow center. Behold, a yellow face in a frilled white cap, tied beneath the chin with white strings! A little grandmother — quite cunning, indeed!

CHRISTMAS GIFT FROM THE PRIDE OF CHINA TREES

Of course Christmas came to our garden as to all the rest of the world. Always on that day of days my little Sister and I looked for flowers in our garden — and always found them. There were late roses even at Christmas time, and those late roses were strangely fragrant. There were often pale blooms on apple, pear, or other fruit trees — just fair promises that never rounded out into fruit.

In the house, long before that day, surprises were always being prepared for us — surprises that would keep us outdoors on Christmas morning, waiting to be called. Among them was sure to be a garden-play surprise. While waiting in the garden, we would talk of former Christmas pleasures. The little coast-country cousin, if she happened to

be visiting us, would tell of delightful sails or baths in the warm sea near her home in the far south on Christmases that she remembered. The cousin from Tennessee would describe real snows — not the sort of snows that the rest of us had seen, soft sprinkles, soon to be melted.

On this particular Christmas, the cousin from Georgia came dancing out of the house, and we saw that her eyes were big, big, big with some sort of pleasure and surprise.

"Oh," she cried, "oh, oh!"

"What is it?" demanded the cousin from Tennessee.

"I saw!" panted the little cousin from Georgia. "I didn't mean to, but I saw!"

"What?" asked the north Alabama cousin.

"Why, the garden-play surprise!" the Georgia cousin exclaimed.

"But don't tell us what it is!" warned the coast-country cousin — "because it

is to be a surprise," she added, and of course we all confessed on the instant that we must not know a surprise till it was ready for us.

"I didn't peep," declared the little Georgia cousin.

"Of course you didn't," said the cousin from Tennessee.

"You just happened to see," said the cousin from north Alabama, "and I wish — almost — we had all just happened to — "

"So do I," agreed the coast-country cousin.

"We'll thes' wait," said my little Sister, folding her hands.

"Might I just say —?"

"If you only might!"

"Should I? — the first letter?"

"I wouldn't."

"No, I mustn't. But if I might — but no!" cried the cousin from Georgia, trying to repress her excitement.

Just then we saw two grown-ups ap-

proaching from the house. The little Georgia cousin waved both hands at them and hopped up and down with glee as she called:

"I saw! I'm sorry! I'm glad—"

"She didn't mean to!"

"She didn't tell!"

"We wouldn't ask!"

So we cried one after the other, all waving welcoming hands at Grown-up Cousin, whom we saw coming through the garden toward us. With her was Somebody. He carried a long white box. The box was so like the few florist's boxes that we had seen that we wondered if they two had found as a surprise for us some flowers rare and beautiful to have bloomed at Christmas.

"Flowers?" sang my little Sister.

"In a minute," called Grown-up Cousin.

Somebody shook the box, and its contents rattled. Not flowers, surely! Flowers would never rattle.

"Ah!" "Oh!" "Ah!" we cried, "What can it be? What can it be?"

"Now, all stand in a row," directed Grown-up Cousin.

We obeyed, and Somebody, standing a little distance from us, held the box while Grown-up Cousin prepared to open it.

"She made them herself," said Somebody.

"All but the gilt ones," corrected Grown-up Cousin.

Oh, how anxious we were to know what the long white box contained! Grown-up Cousin put her hands into the box, and again we heard that exciting, mysterious rattle! Then she drew out handfuls of what seemed to be jewels!—red, rose, orange, purple, green, blue, gold!—strings and chains and heaps of jewels, or what looked like jewels, tumbling over each other, falling from Grown-up Cousin's hands! With her brilliant treasures she came to the row of us, while we gazed and wondered; and as we stood all speechless with surprise, she clasped a necklace of beauty about the throat of each of us.

One was rose and gold.

One was pale blue and gold.

One was deep red and gold.

One was purple and gold.

One was sage green and gold.

One was amber and gold.

They were wonderful, those necklaces! We were still too amazed and delighted

to speak, though Grown-up Cousin had reached the end of the row.

"Christmas gift," she said, "from me and the Pride of China trees!"

We were freshly amazed and could recover only enough of our senses to call out, "Thank you! Thank you!" as she and Somebody walked back through the garden, talking and laughing, leaving us with our treasures.

The little cousin from Tennessee had unclasped her necklace and was passing the beads with wondering touch through her fingers.

"They can't — they just can't be carved — from the wood?" she questioned. Indeed, each bead of every color except the smooth gold ones was as if beautifully carved: five little grooves in every bead.

"It would have taken years and years to carve them," said the coast-country cousin wisely.

"Can they be — berries?" asked the cousin from north Alabama.

That was a wondrous thought — the berries! We knew they came in clusters after the fragrant flowers had gone. The bare limbs of every Pride of China tree hung loaded now with bunches of wrinkled, yellow berries. But those berries were soft; these beads were firm and hard.

The mystery was too deep for us. We ran to the house as quickly as we could. There we learned the story of our beads. They were the seeds of the berries of the Pride of China trees. Grown-up Cousin had had the berries boiled till the soft wrinkled cover could be rubbed from the seed. She had then dried the seeds in the sun, and dyed them in the lovely colors. After that they were ready for stringing. Indeed,

there was a hole almost through each one — only a touch of the needle completed it — a hole like that left when the flower center was removed from its socket in our springtime bead stringing.

Grown-up Cousin had threaded a golden bead between each two colored ones, to give a "Christmas glow," she said.

We made necklaces ourselves, afterwards, with or without the gilded beads. We made them sometimes all of one color, sometimes of two colors. And oh, more than ever we loved our dear Pride of China trees!

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